

2005-2006 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

High Priority Issues

1. **Expansion of Property Tax Lid Lift Authority From One Year up to Six Years (SSB 5333) & (HB 1446) For Special Purpose Districts.** This is the WFCAs number one priority for the 2006 legislative session. The WFCAs supports amendments to include special purpose districts in multi-year lid lift authority currently provided to cities and counties only. This legislation will provide up to a six year authority with a declared growth factor set by the fire district in the ballot language.
2. **Mitigation of Annexation Impacts.** The Legislative Committee has, by unanimous vote, proceeded with drafting of legislation to mitigate fire district financial impacts due to annexation of cities. Various areas may be addressed such as referendum vote, contracts for services, liabilities and elimination of the transfer of assets to cities.
3. **Volunteer Firefighter Pension Enhancements.** The Legislative Committee supports enhancements to the Volunteer Relief and Pension Program as long as it is fiscally responsible and will not impact the financial health of the program. We expect a legislative proposal in the 2006 session and will take a position once a bill has been introduced. The WFCAs has traditionally supported volunteer firefighter pension issues.
4. **Arson Registration (HB 1746).** HB 1746 would mandate that convicted arsonists register in the county that they reside. The WFCAs supports this legislation and the work of Representative Holmquist in addressing this issue. We realize this may be a cost issue with the county.
5. **Public Disclosure Act Amendment.** The WFCAs expects another legislative proposal in 2006 that would repeal local elected officials' right to attorney/client privilege. The WFCAs strongly opposes any legislation that limits commissioners' right to consult with legal counsel in private. WFCAs believes this would have a chilling effect on local government elected officials' ability to function without fear of being personally sued.

Other Issues

- **Public Pension Issues LEOFF 2.** The WFCAs will monitor all pension issues and review any financial impacts which may occur.
- **Inclusion of Special Districts in Municipal Research Council Functions.** The WFCAs supports this concept. Examination of funding source will be critical to actual progression of bills. Public ports association will propose legislation in 2006 and WFCAs representatives will meet with ports to discuss funding mechanisms.

- **LEOFF 1 Pension Funds.** The WFCA will monitor any legislation in relation to LEOFF 1 pension surplus funds. There is speculation that legislation may be introduced in regard to the LEOFF 1 surplus pension funds that will eliminate the 60% cap for current actives.
- **Supplemental Budget.** The WFCA Legislative Committee voted to support the state legislature in meeting its actuarial guidelines by utilizing a portion of the state surplus to pay off unfunded pension obligations for all employee groups. It appears that a budget surplus is estimated at over 1 billion dollars.
- **Growth Management Issues.** The WFCA will monitor all GMA legislation and take appropriate measures to mitigate any impacts on fire districts. Both positive and negative legislation may be forwarded and will be reviewed by WFCA legislative representatives.
- **Post Retirement Health Care Benefits.** The WFCA will continue to monitor all legislation for negative impacts and will oppose any legislation which mandates the employer to pay premiums or would negatively impact the WFCA Health Care program. WFCA considers any changes as an unfunded mandate.
- **Repeal of Sunset for State E-911 Advisory Committee.** The WFCA supports the repeal of the sunset clause for the enhanced 911 advisory committee as this committee provides vital input to state emergency management officials.
- **State Agency Legislation:** The WFCA will continue to monitor and take appropriate positions on all legislation from state agencies such as:
 - Department of Health
 - Department of Natural Resources
 - State Auditor
 - State Patrol
 - Department of Revenue

Note: The first legislative report will be posted on the WFCA web site on Friday, January 20, 2006. The web site address is www.wfca.wa.gov.